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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1092
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RHOVQHS/COMSEVENTHFLT IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANILA 001521

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP, EAP/RSP, EAP/MTS
STATE PASS TO USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [CASC](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [RP](#) [SOCI](#)
SUBJECT: NEXT STEPS IN ASSISTING TYPHOON FRANK VICTIMS

REF: MANILA 1504: RAPID RESPONSE TO TYPHOON FRANK

1.(U) THIS IS AN ACTION MESSAGE -- SEE PARAGRAPH 6

12. (U) SUMMARY: Typhoon Frank struck the Philippines June 21-22, leaving an estimated 300 people dead, 800 missing, and USD 22 million in property damage in 20 Philippine provinces. The death toll is expected to rise significantly as hundreds of bodies are recovered from the sunken ferry "Princess of the Stars," which capsized off Sibuyan Island with at least 800 passengers and crew on board (reftel). In their June 24 meeting in Washington, President Bush and Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo agreed that the USS Ronald Reagan and its carrier group would be dispatched to the Philippines to render assistance. Post requests that the Department of State send the required message to Department of Defense to obtain approval for the Reagan carrier group and other PACOM humanitarian relief assets to provide assistance to the Philippines. END SUMMARY.

13. (U) Typhoon Frank ravaged 20 provinces in the Philippines June 21-22, affecting more than half a million people, 70,000 of whom are now in evacuation centers. Although the present death-toll estimate stands at 300, the number will climb as bodies are recovered. In addition to devastation caused by floods, storm surge, and landslides, the ferry "Princess of the Stars" sank in the area of the Romblon Island chain with 742 known passengers and 130 crew members on the manifest. According to the National Disaster Coordination Council (NDCC), the initial property damage is estimated at USD 22 million and includes destroyed or damaged homes, school structures, and crops. However, damage estimates are expected to rise as the effects of the storm's flood waters and 170 kph winds on bridges, roads, and power stations are more fully assessed.

14. (U) In their June 24 meeting in Washington, Presidents Bush and Arroyo agreed that the USS Ronald Reagan and its accompanying vessels (one cruiser, two destroyers, and one frigate) would provide humanitarian assistance to the typhoon-stricken areas in the Philippines. Previously, Cabinet Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita conveyed to Charge on June 23 the Philippine government's desire for assistance from the USG, followed by an official request from the NDCC, which is charged with carrying out relief efforts.

15. (U) The Reagan carrier group is currently positioned off the southwest coast of Panay Island in the central Philippines. In addition, the USNS Stockham, with search-and-rescue capable helicopters, small boats, and scuba team, is in Philippine territorial waters, and is engaged in search and recovery activities. Over the past 48 hours, a

U.S. P-3 Orion maritime surveillance aircraft has been flying over the Sibuyan Sea, providing images of the aftermath of the sunken ferry "Princess of the Stars" to the Philippine Navy and Coast Guard.

16. (U) ACTION REQUEST: Embassy Manila requests that the Department of State send the required message to the Department of Defense to obtain approval for DoD commands and elements to provide disaster relief such as water purification, emergency power, airlift capabilities, bridge, road and building repair, medical aid and other forms of assistance as required to assist Philippine authorities conducting disaster-response efforts in Ilo-Ilo and other typhoon-ravaged areas of the Philippines.
MEMMOTT